

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. By this amendment, the specification and claims 1-6, 8, 10-15 and 18-20 are amended. No new matter is added by these amendments. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

In reply to the March 30, 2007 Election of Species Requirement, Applicants provisionally elected Species I, Figures 1-9. Applicants submit that claims 1-20 still read on elected Species I. As discussed below for the 35 U.S.C. §102(e) rejection, Applicants respectfully maintain that the Office Action has failed to establish each and every common element disclosed in each of the species is known in the prior art. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that lack of unity of invention has not been established, and thus the Election of Species Requirement should be withdrawn.

The Office Action objects to the specification for informalities. The specification has been amended to overcome the objection based on the Examiner's helpful comments. In particular, Applicants have replaced the term "pitch" with "distance." With regard to the other terms that the Examiner considers unclear, inexact or verbose, Applicants disagree. Applicants request that the Examiner explain why the terms are unclear, inexact or verbose if the objection is to be maintained. Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. By this Amendment, claims 1-6, 8, 10-15 and 18-20 have been amended responsive to the rejection based on the Examiner's helpful comments. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3-9 and 14-17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,722,416 to Varley et al. (hereinafter "Varley"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 calls for an a posture holding bar that is provided horizontal to at least a lower portion of the shutter curtain, such that a width of the posture holding bar is shorter than that of the shutter curtain so as to be spaced between the fitting pieces and the end portions of the posture holding bar, and shutter curtain portions that are fitted in the rail grooves of the guide rails are set to be right-and-left end portions of the shutter curtain where the posture holding bar cannot reach. Varley fails to disclose these features because Varley fails to discuss a posture holding bar of the sheet shutter device that is shorter in width than the sheet shutter curtain and does not extend to the guide rails.

The Office Action, on page 8, states that Varley teaches a sheet shutter device in which fitting pieces 66f, 68f, 66a, and 68a are provided at both side portions of the sheet-shaped shutter curtain 22 and wherein a posture holding bar 58 is provided to the lower end portion of the shutter curtain 22. However, col 5, lines 34-39 of Varley, discloses that slots 54f and 56f, which are part of the guide rails 54 and 56 are operable for receiving the shutter curtain 22 as well as opposite ends of the posture holding bar 58. At the opposite ends of the posture holding bar are boss portions 66f and 68f (col. 5, lines 61-65). The boss portions 66f and 68f are integrally formed on the ends of posture holding bar 58 so as to be fitted into the slots 54f and 56f (Figs 8 and 11, col. 5, lines 61-67 and col. 6 lines 19-37). Therefore, the posture holding bar 58 is disclosed as being wide enough to reach the guide rails 54 and 56.

This is different from the sheet shutter device that is claimed in claim 1, wherein the fitting pieces are provided on the side portions of the shutter curtain and the shutter curtain occupies a certain space between the posture holding bar and the guide rails. Thus, the posture holding bar of claim 1 does not extend wide enough to come in contact with the guide

rails. This design feature solves many of the problems that a sheet shutter design such as Varley has (i.e. opening/closing sounds, wearing down of the rail grooves and less ambient noise when the fitting pieces are restored in to the rail grooves after displacement). Therefore, Varley's posture sheet shutter device does not teach on all of the features of claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 2 and 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Varley in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,884,617 to Coenraets; and rejects claims 10 and 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Varley in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,526,865 to Coenraets. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

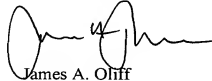
Neither of the remaining applied references overcome the deficiencies of Varley in disclosing a posture holding bar that is shorter in width than that of the shutter curtain, wherein the shutter curtain is spaced between the fitting pieces and the end portions of the posture holding bar, and the posture holding bar cannot reach the rail grooves of the guide rails, as called for in claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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